



Are you dense? Ask your doctor.

QUICK FACTS ABOUT DENSE BREAST TISSUE

- ❖ The National Cancer Institute estimates that one in eight women will develop breast cancer in their lifetime.
- ❖ Women who have dense breast tissue are at a four to six times greater risk of developing breast cancer than women who do not.
- ❖ High breast tissue density is a greater relative risk for breast cancer in women than having one first-degree relative with breast cancer, according to the American Cancer Society.
- ❖ 40% of women who get a mammogram have dense breast tissue.
- ❖ The presence of dense breast tissue is the main reason a mammogram fails to detect cancer, according to the National Cancer Institute.

For more information about dense breast tissue, contact your health care provider or go to the web addresses inside.



Senator Jeff Stone, Pharm.D.

CAPITOL OFFICE
State Capitol, Room 4062
Sacramento, CA 95814
TEL 916.651.4028
FAX 916.651.4928

DISTRICT OFFICE
45-125 Smurr Street, Suite B
Indio, CA 92201

MURRIETA OFFICE
25186 Hancock Avenue, Suite 320
Murrieta, CA 92562
TEL 760.398.6442
FAX 760.398.6470

senator.stone@senate.ca.gov
www.senate.ca.gov/stone



Are you dense? Ask your doctor.

**“Forty percent of women
who get a mammogram have
dense breast tissue.”**

– JOURNAL OF THE NATIONAL CANCER INSTITUTE



WHAT IS DENSE BREAST TISSUE?

Breast tissue is composed of two types: fatty (nondense) tissue and connective (dense) tissue. The ratio of fatty to connective tissue differs among all women.

WHAT ARE THE RISKS OF DENSE BREAST TISSUE?

Dense breast tissue can impede the ability of a mammogram to detect abnormalities or cancer. When a woman gets a mammogram, the fatty tissue appears dark and the dense tissue appears white. Tumors are also dense tissue and appear white. This can make it more difficult to detect a tumor in dense breasts because it looks similar to the area around it. Dense breast tissue also is an independent risk factor for the development of breast cancer.

HOW DO I DETERMINE IF I HAVE DENSE BREAST TISSUE?

Schedule a mammogram. A radiologist can determine your breast density by examining the x-rays. Radiologists use a grading scale that breaks density levels into four categories, ranging from “almost entirely fatty” to “extremely dense tissue present.” Your radiologist or physician can explain the mammography results to you.



WHAT DO I DO IF I HAVE DENSE BREAST TISSUE?

Talk with your doctor about your individual risk factors for breast cancer, such as breast density, age, family history and your own health history. You may decide that you would benefit from supplementary screening tests. You should also schedule a yearly breast exam with your doctor and continue to conduct your own monthly breast exams.

WHY HAVEN'T I HEARD OF BREAST DENSITY BEFORE NOW?

While federal law requires radiologists to send a report to your referring physician that contains your breast density, it is rarely communicated directly to the patient. **ASK YOUR DOCTOR ABOUT YOUR DENSITY!**

 **Are you dense?
Ask your doctor.**

ONLINE RESOURCES:

National Cancer Institute at the National Institutes of Health

www.cancer.gov/ncicancerbulletin/archive/2008/102108/page10

AND

www.cancer.gov/cancertopics/factsheet/detection/mammograms

Mayo Clinic

www.mayoclinic.com/health/mammogram/AN01137

California Department of Health Care Services: Every Woman Counts

www.dhcs.ca.gov/services/cancer/ewc/pages/default.aspx

The George Washington University Hospital

www.gwhospital.com/Hospital-Services-A-N/Breast-Care-Center/Are-Your-Breasts-Dense-

Are You Dense, Inc.

www.areyoudense.org

